

Report

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

■ 1.0 Site Description

The Apostle Island National Lakeshore consists of 21 forested islands and 12 miles of mainland Lake Superior shoreline. The islands and mainland include primitive stretches of sand beach, spectacular sea caves, remnant old-growth forests, resident bald eagles and black bears, and the largest collection of lighthouses in the NPS. The lakeshore covers 69,372 acres, of which 27,232 are below the water line. The Lakeshore is located on the south shore of Lake Superior in Ashland and Bayfield Counties, Wisconsin (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Lighthouse

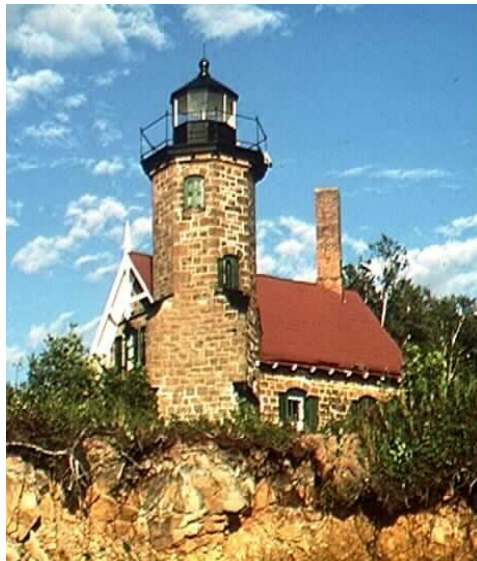
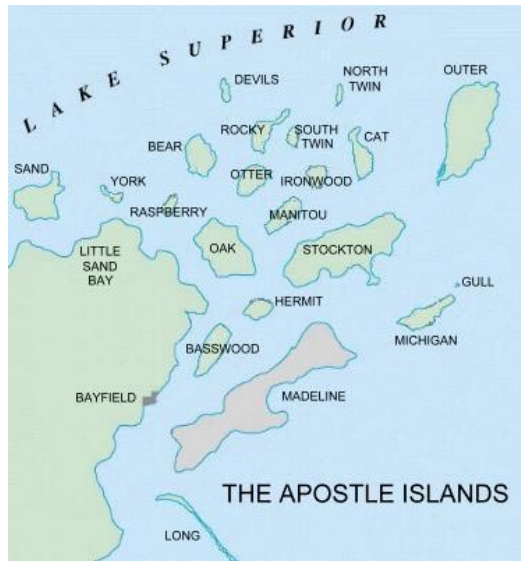


Figure 2. Map of Apostle Islands



Visitation was 237,000 in 1998. Over 85 percent of the visits occur from June through September, and mostly on weekends. Most visitors are from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois, especially the Twin Cities and Chicago. The typical length of stay is two days.

Mainland visitor centers are located at Bayfield and at Little Sand Bay, which is located 13 miles north of Bayfield. Both visitor centers are accessible by auto.

The Apostle Islands National Lakeshore is a water-based park, in that a boat of some type is needed to reach the islands. Islands in the national lakeshore range in distance from 1.5 to more than 20 miles offshore. They are accessible by private boat, the Apostle Island Cruise Service, and the Apostle Island Water Taxi, Inc.

There is no mainland camping although primitive camping is allowed on 18 of the 21 islands, with a permit. A variety of lodging and camping facilities are available in the Bayfield area. Some camping is done on sailboats.

Activities include sailing, boating, sea kayaking, camping, hiking, picnicking, swimming, scuba diving, excursion cruises, sport fishing and hunting, cross country skiing, visiting museums and exhibits, and participating in guided programs. There are over 50 miles of maintained trails in the national lakeshore, primarily on nine islands. Regularly scheduled range-guided tours, walks, and evening programs are available seasonally.

A minimum of one half day is required to stop at the headquarters visitor center and take the basic three-hour excursion cruise through the national lakeshore. One to three days are necessary to visit the islands and experience a variety of the areas natural and cultural sites.

The three-mile long Little Sand Bay Road provides access to the Little Sand Bay visitor center and Hokenson Brothers Fishery. Meyers Road provides access off State Highway 13 to a parking lot, picnic area and kayak launch site at Meyers Beach on Squaw Bay, about five miles northeast of Cornucopia, Wisconsin.

■ 2.0 Existing Alternative Transportation Systems

The primary means of transportation for the majority of the attractions in the Park is by boat. With the exception of the mainland visitor centers, the park attractions are not accessible by automobile.

A concessionaire, the Apostle Islands Cruise Service, Inc., which also operates Apostle Islands Water Taxi, Inc, provides public transportation from the Lakeshore Headquarters and Interpretative Center at Bayfield, Wisconsin. The Cruise Service provides three types of boat transportation to the islands (see Figure 3):

1. Tours to various combinations of islands at different times of the day, each lasting about three hours. The cost per adult for a tour is \$22.95. There are six tours offered.
2. Round-trip shuttle service to Raspberry, Sand, or Oak Islands with 1.5 to three hours allowed on the island for hiking or interpretative tours by Park Rangers. The cost per adult for the shuttle service is also \$22.95.
3. The water taxi, which is an on-demand, personal service in a six-passenger boat. The cost for this service is \$70 per hour. Thus, the round-trip cost varies by destination and could reach \$300.

Figure 3. Boat Service



Kayaks may be rented from Apostle Islands Kayaks for \$40 for the first day and \$25 for subsequent days. Rental kayaks may be ferried to an island by a scheduled shuttle boat or water taxi but no kayaking between islands is allowed.

Public boat launches are available in the communities of Bayfield, Red Cliff, and Little Sand Bay. At least eight local marinas offer facilities for boaters.

The Madeline Island Ferry provides shuttle service between the mainland city of Bayfield and the town of LaPointe on the island. (Madeline Island is not part of the National Lakeshore.) Eighteen trips per day are available in the summer at a rate of \$3.50 each way for adults and \$2.50 for children.

Several Bayfield marine operators offer sail or motor boats for charter, either with or without a captain. These may be sailed among the islands or further into Lake Superior.

Other access to the islands is via Great Lakes cruise ship or small airplane to Madeline Island.

■ 3.0 Alternative Transportation System Needs

Managers of the National Lakeshore feel that the concessionaire is meeting the island transportation needs of the visiting public although visitors occasionally complain about the cost of the water shuttle. Operating public transportation on Lake Superior is an expensive proposition. The Park management has several times considered subsidizing this cost but has decided against it.

There is no identified need for an Alternative Transportation System (ATS) on the mainland.

■ 4.0 Basis of Alternative Transportation System Needs

The Lakeshore's needs are currently being met by its existing ATS.

■ 5.0 Bibliography

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Internet site: <http://www.nps.gov/apis/>.
Information printed November 1999.

■ 6.0 Persons Interviewed

Alford J. Banta. Telephone Interview. November 19, 1999